

Attorney Docket No.: 66-12424

Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has required that the claims be restricted to one of the following inventions: (I) claims 1-7 for a gate valve; and (II) claims 8-15 for a combination tubing hanger, tubing spool and closure member. Accordingly, applicant has canceled claims 8-15.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings as not showing every feature specified in the claims. Applicant has instead amended claim 1 to clarify that the lateral first branch and the longitudinal second branch need not be adjacent, but merely in fluid communication. In light of this amendment to claim 1, applicant submits that the drawings do not require correction.

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, the Examiner states that recitation in claim 1 of a lateral first branch connected to a longitudinal second branch is inconsistent with the open and closed positions of the gate recited in claim 1. Claim 1 has accordingly been amended to alleviate this apparent inconsistency.

Claim 1 now requires that the fluid flow passage include a lateral first branch which is in fluid communication with a longitudinal second branch. In the embodiments of applicant's invention shown in Figures 2, 3A and 3B, the lateral first branch could be the lower lateral branch 54 and the longitudinal second branch could be the upper axial branch 60. These two branches are clearly in

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fluid communication; fluid is allowed to flow from the lower lateral branch 54 through the gate cavity 62 and the upper lateral branch 58 into the upper axial branch 60. In the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 4, the lateral first branch is the lateral branch 112 and the longitudinal second branch is the upper axial branch 116. Moreover, the lateral branch 112 and the upper axial branch 116 are in fluid communication through the gate cavity 62.

Furthermore, these examples of the lateral first branch being in fluid communication with the longitudinal second branch are consistent with the recitations in claim 1 pertaining to the gate. Claim 1 requires that the gate have a first flow port which is connected to a second flow port. In the embodiments of the invention shown in Figures 2, 3A and 3B, the first flow port could be the flow port 74 and the second flow port could be the flow port 76. In the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 4, the first flow port is the flow port 122 and the second flow port is the flow port 124.

These examples of the first and second flow ports are consistent with the requirements in claim 1 that, in the open position of the gate the first flow port is aligned with the first branch and the second flow port is in fluid communication with the second branch, and in the closed position the first flow port is offset from the first branch. In the embodiments of the invention shown in Figures 2, 3A and 3B, the first flow port 74 is clearly aligned with the lower lateral branch 54. In addition, the second flow port 76 is clearly in fluid communication with the upper axial branch 60; fluid is allowed to flow from the second flow port 76 through the third flow port 78 and the upper lateral branch 58 into the upper axial branch 60

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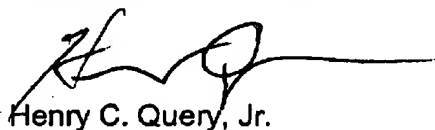
(see Figures 2 and 3B). Also, in the closed position of the gate, the first flow port 74 is clearly offset from the lateral first branch 54 (see Figure 3A).

In the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 4, when the gate is open the first flow port 122 is aligned with the lateral branch 112 and the second flow port 124 is in fluid communication with the upper axial branch 116. Also, when the gate is closed, the first flow port 122 is offset from the lateral branch 112.

Therefore, applicant submits that claims 1-7 are now in full compliance with the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112.

In light of the foregoing, claims 1-7 are submitted as allowable. Favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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